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conceive. The names of the learned Greeks are embalmed in history who fled from their country on the capture of Constantinople, and brought the philosophy and literature of their forefathers into Italy. A like renown awaits the benevolent and pious men, who shall take the lead in carrying back to Greece the improvements of Western Europe and America.

ART. II.—*Reform in England.*

The Debate in the House of Commons on the Reform Bill.

The more we contemplate the subject of reform in Europe, the more important does it seem to us. In our number for July, we submitted to our readers our impressions upon some general topics, connected with the present aspect of things, on the other side of the Atlantic. The state of the reform question in England, as the most interesting and important of these topics, received a proportionate share of our attention. We approached it with a diffidence, inspired by the magnitude of the subject,—our distance from the stage on which the great drama is acting,—and our consequent ignorance of many of the local details and secret springs of the movement. But its momentous character grows upon us, as we contemplate it. It tasks the apprehension, it excites the imagination. We cannot sit still, and behold unmoved this mighty operation in human affairs. The *experimentum in corpore vili*, the fate of East Retford, and Grampound, and Cricklade, and Aylesbury, might be discussed here without emotion. But this is the *experimentum crucis*. It is an operation of life or death on a mighty empire.

The question of reform in England is an American question; and this is among the strongest of the motives, which lead us to discuss it. Our greatest commercial connexions are with England; half of our foreign commerce is carried on with her; and much of the remainder is affected by the state of her markets. As the great emporium of the world, whatever powerfully affects her is felt by us. An English pamphlet now before us uses a language on this subject, which justifies us in this view of it.* Our commercial readers will recollect

*‘The truth is, that this reform question is pressing at the present moment like an incubus on the industry and internal commerce of the

the great temporary stagnation produced in our trade with France, by the brief commotions of the 'three days.' It was at one period impossible to dispose of the best bills on Paris; no one was willing to execute an order from France; and the price of our staples was immediately affected. The influence of that revolution on this country may be estimated by the fact, that the export of cotton to France, which in the year ending in September, 1830, was two hundred thousand seven hundred and ninety-one bales, sunk, in the year ending September, 1831, to one hundred and twenty-seven thousand seventy-nine; a decline of one-third.

But we ought, perhaps, to be ashamed to resort to such an illustration of our assertion, that this is an American question. Any such effect on commerce, will, except in the event of a convulsive and bloody revolution, be temporary. But our political relations with Great Britain are so numerous and intimate, that whatever changes the nature and permanently modifies the action of the British Government, is very important to us. From the time that our continent was first settled till 1815, our politics were to a great degree affected and decided by the state of things in England; and this almost as much after the Revolution as before. The new position of the world since the downfall of Napoleon, has happily rendered our politics much more independent of Europe in general, and England in particular. But any thing, which should essentially disturb the action of England on the politics of the world, (and this, as we shall endeavor to show, will be the inevitable consequence of the reform of Parliament,) would be almost as promptly felt in this country as in England herself.

Then, too, it is to be remembered, that we are completely surrounded by British colonies. We have the West Indies on our front, and the continental colonies on our flank and almost in our rear. An idle controversy, relative to the form in which our trade with these colonies shall be carried on, has, for the

country. All great private undertakings are suspended. The opulent of every class, (but those more especially who derive their incomes from the funds, from the clerical or legal professions, or from any department of the public service,) oppressed with a growing sense of the insecurity of their resources, are limiting their expenditure very generally to articles of urgent necessity; and that instinctive propensity to hoard the precious metals, the sure forerunner of great national convulsions, is already beginning to operate on prices, as well in this country as over the continent.'

last five years, had a very considerable influence on the domestic politics of the United States. It requires no sagacity to perceive, that any thing which should seriously affect the existing organization of the British Government at home, would, in its effect on these our colonial neighbors, give rise to the most important and agitating questions in this country.

Besides all this, the general position which England stands in, as a great first-rate power, is to be confirmed or changed in the issue of the present controversy. She now claims the right to interfere in every great question of international politics, whoever may be the more immediate parties. As late as May, 1830, we find Mr. Huskisson, who adopted, with the political system of Mr. Canning, little of his ambition and less of his temperament, declaring that England, as the first maritime power in Europe, 'would not suffer the United States to bring under their dominion a greater portion of the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, than they now possess.' This was said *apropos* of some speculations in the American newspapers, on the desirableness of the purchase of Texas by the United States; a province, which, in the opinion of many of our soundest statesmen, was legitimately included within the limits of Louisiana, and which stretches for a vast extent along our south-western frontier. We think it very probable, that, on the evening when Mr. Huskisson permitted himself this menace, the British ministry had received the advice of some new kingdom added to their Eastern empire. We shall have occasion, in the course of our remarks, to express the opinion, that, with the adoption of the proposed new principle of organization in the British Government, this extensive interference in foreign politics will both from necessity and of choice cease.

The event of the measure pending in Parliament is, of course, in the highest degree uncertain, and to us beyond the reach of confident conjecture. Since our former remarks were submitted to the public, a House of Commons which appeared too nearly balanced on the question, has been dissolved, and a new one, with a great supposed accession of strength in favor of reform, has been elected. The issue of this appeal to the electors showed the popular favor with which the bill was regarded; and it was supposed that, on the organization of the new Parliament, it would be urged with rapidity through a consenting House. But the details of the bill have been attended with perplexity and embarrassment. It has been

forced to run the gauntlet through the ranks of officious friends and relentless foes. Amendments both *bona fide* and vexatious have obstructed its way. It has been felt, at every step, that while the bill professed a remedy on principle of enormous evils, the remedy itself was laboring under a portion of the very evil to be remedied,—and that without the apology of prescription. It will probably be found in the practical operation of the bill, should it, as it now stands, become a law, that of itself, and unattended with other great measures of reform in the constitution and administration of the country, not one of the evils of which the people most complain will be remedied, while the bill itself stops far short of its own principles.

In this state of things, a warfare truly terrific has been waged against it by some of the most powerful periodical presses. It is attacked as a whole and in detail. The objections against the entire system are pressed forward to outweigh specific improvements; and the inconveniences of the detail are arrayed and exaggerated in prejudice of the system. It is but a few years, since it was deemed impossible even for a tory ministry, to fight through the House of Peers, the transfer to large towns of the franchise of single boroughs, convicted of the most profligate venality. What is to be expected now, when boroughs are to be disfranchised by the wholesale, without any specific charge, and the representation of towns and counties created as it were *de novo*, and all this by a whig ministry, who, though carrying with them the majority of the community and of the writers for the daily press, must, from the constitution of English society, be opposed by a great proportion of the men of high education and literary influence in the country?

Nor is the vehemence, with which the Reform Bill is assailed, matched, as it seems to us, with corresponding ardor and concert of defence. As far as we can judge beyond the Atlantic, the fervor of reform is somewhat abated on the part of its friends, and pride of opinion may possibly come in for a portion of the enthusiasm which still remains. No man can tell what he will think of a subject, till it has been not only solemnly but passionately argued. He can weigh it solemnly in his own mind and his own closet, but the heat of angry debate opens and expands the argument, and shows its joints, and seams, and cracks. The reformers in England appear to us somewhat tired of the project; they wish it to obtain, but they are less sanguine of its successful operation, and more awakened

to its difficulties. They fell in love with it at a distance, as an ideal perfection. When it is practically handled, it is found a thorny and perplexing matter of fact. They find that they are making themselves responsible for the happy issue of a thousand doubtful experiments, and buying with certain odium a very uncertain reversion of praise. Should we venture an opinion, as to the precise state of mind with which the ministers regard the bill, we should say they would not lament to have it defeated by a small majority. They would then go out in a good cause, claiming the merit of all the benefits which would have flowed from the adoption of their measure, and ascribing all the evils and troubles that exist or may arise to its rejection. They are not men, judging of course on general principles of human nature, seriously to wish to take on their shoulders the responsibility of a great revolution, which they probably begin to believe their project will prove. A revolution may be headed by men of two classes. One class consists of those who are fired by intense ambition,—who look upon the country, its laws and institutions, and the welfare of its citizens, as the steps by which they are to mount to guilty and bloody greatness. The Cæsars and Cromwells, who feel the passions which civil war enkindles, and are willing to use the means which it furnishes, are the men to lead on a revolution of this kind. It is they at least, whoever may commence it, that are too apt to break in and carry it on.—An outraged, oppressed, and exhausted people, trained in the school of liberty, but denied its rights, after years and generations of suffering, will follow the patriotic men, who, through self-denial and personal sacrifice, lead them to a revolution of the second class. The present ministry of England fall into neither of these classes; nor do they regard the situation of affairs, as resembling that, in which a revolution of either character is to be brought on. They are able and accomplished men of wealth and education, happily situated in life, enjoying,—whether in office or out,—some of the most enviable positions in society, with every thing to risk and nothing personal to gain, by a great change; and though they take up the question as one of enormous evils requiring a strong remedy, they do not admit the evils to require, nor do they propose to apply, the remedy of revolution. Should it be found or made to assume that character, they are not of the class of men elected to conduct it. It is not from elegant saloons, well furnished libraries, luxurious cabinets, nor princely

villas, that the spirit of radical reform ever did or ever will march forth, with decision in his port, and fearful change, perhaps convulsions, war, and death in his eye. That spirit issues, as the case may be, from the conqueror's tent, the dark chambers of fanaticism, the comfortless garrets of able, needy, and reckless adventurers, or the humble abodes of a long-suffering and exasperated people. Prosperous gentlemen must content themselves with *amateur* reform. Grand changes in the constitution of ancient monarchies,—great and radical reform,—may be contemplated and worshipped at a distance as a mild and genial star. But as it draws near, it swells and reddens, and throws out its streaming terrors across the firmament; and when it comes blazing down from its aphelion, heaving the tides to the mountain tops, changing the zones, unfixing the poles, and melting the heavens with fervent heat, it is a season, when none but the Titans and demigods of the moral and intellectual world may go forth to lay the foundations of the new creation amidst the wrecks of the old.

Our last accounts from England have carried the Reform Bill not quite through the Committee. When it has passed the House of Commons, it is to stand the trial of the Lords, where but last year, Mr. Huskisson despaired of ever procuring a concurrence in the transfer of the elective franchise from the rotten boroughs to the large towns.* And here we cannot withhold our testimony to the sagacity, with which Mr. Huskisson foresaw the course, which this great question has taken. This distinguished statesman, to whose character we hope to find another opportunity of doing justice, (justice which shall not be stinted by the unfriendly judgments, which he took some occasions to propagate on the subject of the American policy, nor by the false fame, which his admirers and partisans have claimed for him, as the head of a new school in British legislation,) partook all Mr. Canning's opinions and prejudices against theoretical reform. He, however,

* 'My right honorable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, gave this House to understand, upon a former evening, that on some future occasion, he may acquiesce in granting the franchise to these towns. Now, sir, I contend that if we are to give representatives to these manufacturing districts at any time, it should be done now. But I am afraid, sir, that whatever *this House* may do, it will be disappointed in its efforts, by an opposition in another place.'—*Mr. Huskisson's Speeches, Vol. III. p. 494.*

strenuously urged the gradual transfer of the franchise of corrupt boroughs to populous towns, and sacrificed his place in the Duke of Wellington's cabinet to his advocacy of such a policy, in the case of East Retford. It was proposed to transfer the representation of that corrupt borough to the great unrepresented city of Birmingham. The Ministry had such a horror of the slightest approach to the principle of theoretical reform, that they insisted on giving the forfeited franchise to the neighboring hundred of Bassetlaw; and the Duke of Wellington allowed Mr. Huskisson, on this slender schism, to go out of his cabinet. In his speeches on that subject, Mr. Huskisson distinctly told the Ministers, that the refusal to adopt the moderate and practical course of transferring to the large towns the vacated privilege of the corrupt boroughs, was the surest way to accelerate the proposal and adoption of measures for a general and sweeping reform. The event has fulfilled the prediction, sooner perhaps than its lamented author had foreseen.

It is probable that before these pages see the light, the question will have been decided. In this country, and under the lights here possessed, it is the better opinion, that the bill will, in some form, become a law; but this opinion is entertained with less confidence than formerly.

But suppose it passed. A great change has then taken place in the British Constitution. We will not insist on the word *revolution*, if it is thought necessary to limit that term to unconstitutional changes of Government accompanied by violence and blood. But a great change has taken place. This change is *the abandonment of prescription, as the principle on which the British House of Commons is constituted*. It is not denied, that small encroachments have from time to time before been made on this principle. It is only by such encroachments and concessions, that a great principle can ever be preserved in a perpetuated application. But it is now avowed, that the House of Commons shall no longer be constituted upon this principle.

The Reform Bill comes to this, for it assumes a minimum of certain required theoretical qualifications, and prescribes that all seats, not possessed of these qualifications, shall be vacated. The old seats which remain untouched (besides the innovations applied to them in the matter of suffrage) remain so, not in virtue of the prescription, but in virtue of possessing the new theoretical qualifications.

It will, therefore, be borne in mind, (what we have not seen distinctly stated,) that the proposed reform extends to every individual seat in the House of Commons; for in addition to the boroughs wholly or partially disfranchised and the seats now for the first time given to counties or cities, every other seat is shifted from the basis of prescription to that of qualification.*

What is the new principle of the House of Commons, and (for it comes to the same thing) the British Constitution? That question has been answered by the King of England; his present Majesty, William IV. The words of kings are weighty, at least when they speak of the Constitution of their own kingdoms. The late House of Commons was very equally divided on the Reform Bill. The Ministry ventured an appeal to the people; and the King, in his speech from the throne, declared that the dissolution was ordered, '*for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of the people.*'

The going of the King to the House of Lords, to proclaim this dissolution, is described, by the journals friendly to reform in England, in the most glowing and triumphant terms. We seem almost to be reading of the descent of *the god of navies*, from the summit of Thracian Samos to the depths of Ægæ:

‘τρέμε δ’ οὐρεα μακρὰ καὶ ὕλη,
Ποσσὶν ὑπ’ ἀθανάτοισι Ποσειδάωνος ἰόντος.’

The House of Lords shakes with the concussion of ‘booming’ artillery, and its portals fly asunder before the approach of the patriot King. Seated upon his throne, surrounded by his Ministers and the peers of England, with his faithful Commons in attendance at the bar, he tells them he dissolves the Parliament, ‘for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of the people, in the only way in which it can most conveniently and authentically be expressed, for the purpose of making such changes in the representation as circumstances may require.’

It is true, the only question avowedly put to the people by the dissolution was, whether they, or rather such of them as exercised the right of suffrage, were in favor of the bill. But that bill is a great change in the representation. It applies a new principle to every seat of the Commons’ House of

* We except, of course, the seats already and within recent times created for qualification; as one of the seats of the County of York, which was taken from Grampound for corruption.

Parliament, and the King says, the adoption of this change is referred by him TO THE SENSE OF THE PEOPLE. For as good a reason as those which dictated this reference, the extent and details of this change ought to be, and eventually and indirectly will be, referred to the sense of the people. For the same reason, if any other mode of collecting the sense of the people on these great questions, more authentic and convenient than that of an election of members of Parliament, should be proposed, it must be adopted. That is, if a regular constituent assembly should be convened, on the principle of an equal geographical representation, or any other equal principle, the sense of the people, thus authentically expressed in favor of some farther modification of the Constitution, must be accepted and obeyed. For the same reason, if this popular sense should settle down in favor of a Government popular in all its branches,—whoever else may stand uncommitted,—the present King of England and his responsible Ministers stand pledged to adopt it.

But the King and his Ministers have, as the event proved, not gone farther than the majority of the people of England. The election of the present Parliament showed that the people were in favor of ascertaining the sense of the people, and would have shown it much more decisively, had the elections been more popular. The sentiment expressed by the King is undoubtedly that of a majority of the people of England, and this it is, which gives it its significance and weight. There cannot be a doubt, that, as the sense of the people has been for a century and a half more and more the directing principle in the administration of public affairs in England, it is henceforth to be so, much more eminently and authoritatively. It has henceforward been applied to the administration; now and hereafter it is applicable to the Constitution. Mr. Pitt, after valiantly sustaining himself for three months against a majority of the House of Commons, took the sense of the people, (meaning always the electors, a body then smaller and less popular than now,) whether he should continue in office. The question now taken has been, whether the House of Commons, the *old* House resting on prescription, should continue in office, and it has been decided in the negative. The people have decided that a new House on new principles shall be created.

The importance of the subject, to which this principle is now

applied, no less than the Constitution of the House of Commons,—the great effective power in the British Government,—and the entire parity of reasoning, by which the same principle must and will be extended to every other question, require of us to regard it as the principle, on which the British Government is henceforward to be organized and administered.

It is, therefore, very important and curious to inquire what will be the consequences of taking *the sense of the people*, as the rule of the Government? In discussing this subject, we shall endeavor to establish and enforce the opinions, briefly indicated in our article of last July.

The following seem to us as some of the most natural and inevitable consequences :—

First. A provision, in the words of his Majesty, of a more ‘convenient and authentic mode’ of ascertaining the sense of the people. As to convenience, there is none to be compared with that of popular representation, the discovery of which is the merit of our forefathers, who settled the American Colonies. For though the then existing organization of the British Parliament wore, as it does now, a semblance of a representative body, it was but a semblance; whereas the state of things in this country made it necessary to create a real representation. In our article of last July, we stated that Mr. Canning denied that the House of Commons was intended to represent the will of the people. The correctness of this statement has been called in question. But if our readers will turn to his speech, made at Liverpool, on occasion of his re-election, 18th of March, 1820, they will find him using this language :—

‘The radical reformer will tell me fairly, that he means not simply to bring the House of Commons back either to the share of power, which it formerly enjoyed, or to the modes of election by which it was formerly chosen; but to make it what according to him it ought to be,—a direct, effectual representative of the people; representing them, not as a delegate commissioned to take care of their interests, but as a deputy appointed to speak their will. Now to this view of the matter, I have no other objection than this :—that the British Constitution is a limited monarchy; that a limited monarchy is, in the nature of things, a mixed Government; but that such a House of Commons, as the radical reformer requires, would in effect be a pure democracy; a power, as it seems to me, inconsistent with any monarchy and unsusceptible of any limitation.’

There are many other passages in Mr. Canning's speeches to the same effect.

We consider it then admitted, that the House of Commons, as now constituted, does not express the sense of the people. That it does not, is declared by the authors of the present bill, to be a grievance too heavy to be longer borne. The measure now before Parliament places the House of Commons on a new basis; a basis far more favorable to an authentic expression of the people's sense. But the reform neither can, nor should stop here. Although the constituency (we quote a word of recent British coinage, which we commend to Sir Robert Peel, as an offset for *talented*) is greatly increased, every reason that has been or can be given for increasing it, demands a farther and systematic extension. What is now proposed to be done is too loose, too conjectural, too destitute of uniformity and equality. A vote in Parliament is too momentous to be given or taken away on averaging calculations. If the bill become a law, it will appear that towns which differ considerably in wealth and population elect the same number of members; that adjacent counties differing in like manner do the same thing, and that a still greater disproportion exists between counties and boroughs as compared with each other. It will also appear, that large numbers of British citizens will be excluded from the right of suffrage, as competent and as well entitled to exercise it as their neighbors. In the last debate, of which we have seen a report, Lord Granville Somerset moved an amendment to the bill, providing for a new district of boroughs in the county of Monmouth. Taking the population of the three northern counties together, Northumberland, Cumberland, and Durham, he found that there was one member to every nineteen thousand persons; but, taking the population of the three counties of Monmouth, Glamorganshire, and Brecknockshire, the proportion was but one to every twenty-four thousand. Lord John Russell said, in reply;

‘That in arranging this system of representation, his Majesty's Ministers did not affect to have settled the just proportion between the population and the number of members, in every case; though the population altogether was more fairly and equally represented than before. If an addition was made to the representation, he could assure the noble Lord, that greater irregularities might be pointed out than that of Monmouth. Monmouth

had a proportion of one member to twenty-three or twenty-four thousand persons, whilst Derby had only one member to thirty-five thousand souls, and Lancashire only one member to every forty-seven or forty-eight thousand persons!

When great questions come to be decided by a few votes in the House of Commons, will Lancashire, with one member for forty-eight thousand inhabitants, be content to be voted down, by members representing other counties on a ratio of one for nineteen thousand? London is to have eight members, which, we suppose, is one for every hundred thousand persons. Liverpool sends but two, which is one for every seventy thousand. Again, it will appear that great differences exist between England, Ireland, and Scotland, in all these respects. Ireland contains one third of the population, and will send but a sixth of the members. Will this satisfy Ireland?

These diversities are all at war with the true principle of the bill. They require for their justification, the old and now discarded principle of prescription, and cannot all plead even that. And when the newly constructed machine comes to work; and when momentous questions come to be carried by very small majorities, and it then appears that a different result would have been produced, had the representation been equal and apportioned on any systematic plan among the population of the United Kingdom, it will be impossible to resist the demand for such a plan. It will be absolutely necessary to organize the House on a system, which will represent the sense of the people *authentically*. There is no way to do this, but that of dividing the country into districts, according to population. There is no other systematic plan that will bear examination. The idea of combining with a ratio of population a ratio of wealth, has something plausible in it. It was one of the provisions of the first new Constitution, adopted in France after the revolution of 1789. But it is wholly nugatory. Under the idea of representing property, as well as population, you apportion representatives among the districts according to the amount of taxation imposed on each. Thus far the plan, perhaps, looks well; at least it conforms to the principle. But when you enter the districts, and come to the exercise of the right of suffrage, you find that you have given to the poor inhabitant of the rich district a larger share of constituent power, than to the rich inhabitant of the poor district;—a result neither reasonable in itself, nor such as the plan was intended

to produce. Mr. Burke exposed the vices of this plan, in his comments on the French Constitution referred to above.

But in addition to this, it is as impossible as it is needless, from the nature of things, in a representative Government, to represent property *as such*. Has there been a question respecting property before Parliament since 1688, on which the men of property of all classes,—nobles, gentlemen, and commoners,—have not been divided? One great interest rules in one county; an opposite interest rules in the next. One peer, with a rental of £200,000 is on one side, and another with the same rental is on the other side.

There is no interest in the community, which can be identified as that of *the property*, apart from a wise and equal administration of law. If you were to put all the rich men into a class, on the plan of Servius Tullius, you would find them divided by the same parties, which in all free Governments divide the people.

Besides all this, the indirect influence of wealth is amply sufficient for its own protection, and quite as great as it ought to be. It must be recollected, that as far as the enactment of equal laws and the just administration of them are concerned, the man of frugal property is the ally of his opulent neighbor. The industrious mechanic is quite as much concerned as the rich capitalist, to have property safe, and to see that the laws protect its acquisition and enjoyment. Beyond the promotion of this end, wealth in great masses ought to have no influence; and in the promotion of this end, it has, as such, no *exclusive* interest.

We come back then to our proposition, that with a view, as the King expresses it, to ascertain the sense of the people authentically, it will very soon be found necessary to establish a regular plan of geographical districts. A little study of our Congressional system will show our friends across the water, with what surprising simplicity and ease this may be done; and they will look at the Gothic complication of burgesses and knights, and the arithmetical entanglements of schedule A and schedule B, with astonishment bordering on incredulity.

Secondly. Next to a convenient and authentic way of expressing the sense of the people, it will be found necessary to remove all great, organized, and insuperable obstacles to its effective expression; and this will require a new modification of the House of Lords. The peers, originally and theoretic-

cally, were a separate estate in the realm ; that is, we suppose, a class of men performing separate functions, and for this purpose enjoying separate privileges. This estate stood originally on the tenure of military service. It would be idle to parade the cheap historical lore that belongs to the subject. Our readers know all about it. No one is ignorant, that the four or five hundred individuals, who now compose the House of Peers, have long ceased to be an estate of the realm, in its ancient authentic sense. They sit, we are taught, in a House of Parliament, *because* they are an estate. But take away their House, and what estate are they then? They have no functions, no interests peculiar to themselves. They raise and pay no troops, lead no armies ; and are neither wiser, richer, nor better bred than their neighbors. It is the principle of the Reform Bill, that the enjoyment of the parliamentary franchise from the oldest periods of the Constitution, creates no claim to its continuance, unless the requisite *qualification* is united with it. Now the qualification of the House of Peers, that is, their being a separate estate of the realm, has for many generations been wearing out, and is now wholly gone. They remain in theory a separate estate, and so is old Sarum in theory a borough, entitled to send two members to Parliament. But, in fact, the peers are distinguished in nothing but their titles from the rest of the community. We take it for granted, that nobody denies this ; and that no one has a better defence to make for the House of Lords, than that made by Mr. Canning, viz. that the Government is a mixed and limited monarchy, and that a House of Peers is a necessary part of such a monarchy. This, of course, is not *reasoning*. It merely asserts a historical fact, as to the official character of the House of Lords. But is this defence of the peerage agreeable to the new principle of the British Government? Is it conformable *to the sense of the people*, that after *their* representatives have adopted an important measure, three or four hundred gentlemen, (selected by the chance of birth, and for no qualifications, from the mass of the population,) shall say, we do not like this measure, and it shall not become a law? This is to suppose the people to have, at the same time and on the same subject, a judgment at war with itself :—to wish that their own will should not be carried into effect. In the Edinburgh Review for July, in estimating the force with which the Reform Bill will go up to the House of Lords,

our learned brother argues, and justly, that from the number of votes against it in the House of Commons, there should be a deduction of all the votes given by the rotten and close borough nominees, because these votes represent merely the opinion of the individual noblemen, having the nomination of those boroughs. And what but the opinions of the same and three or four hundred other individual noblemen is represented, by the entire vote of the House of Lords? And why was not the tradition, by which a nobleman made the nomination to the seat in the House of Commons, as good as the tradition by which he holds his own seat in the House of Lords?

The Governments of Europe (except the French) rest, if we may so express it, on an historical basis; they are what time and events have made them, and a great deal of which no reasonable account can now be given, exists and is perpetuated by the force of custom. In countries not despotically governed, this acquiescence in what exists, is the great strength of the Constitution. The English institutions rest, for the most part, on this basis. It is the basis of the common law. It is a basis firm enough for common times. But when violent times come, and radical changes are projected by ambitious innovators armed with military strength, or when sweeping reforms are undertaken by speculative statesmen, it is then plain, that the historical basis fails. It is avowedly repudiated. The military usurper tramples it under foot; the speculative reformer professes to disregard it. They are the more successful, because it is of the nature of the historical basis, as it were, of itself to perish, to rot away. The name remains,—and scarcely that,—but the thing is gone. The friends of the existing system tell you, that a nobility is a part of the history, nay, of the antiquity of the British monarchy, that there have been barons, and earls, and dukes, from time immemorial; an integral estate of the realm, of eminent dignity. But when you scrutinize the subject nearly, you find that the name only is ancient, that the substance which it once described, has ceased to exist; and that the peers of England are in no degree different from the rest of the citizens, nor for any reason more competent or better entitled to form a house of legislation, than many hundreds and thousands of their fellow-citizens. So that even on the historical basis, the House of Peers has no solid foundation. It might stand unshaken so long as the principle of prescription is not called in question, but questioned

and rejected as it is in the House of Commons, we see not how it can stand in the House of Lords.

What does the great English revolution of the seventeenth century teach us on this subject,—what is the lesson of the Commonwealth? We think it entirely safe to ask that question, for we cannot doubt, that the revolution now commenced will go, to say the least, as far, not in popular violence, but in giving a popular character to the Government. The revolution of 1640 was a passionate, tumultuary, perhaps we may say fanatical movement, soon running into a military despotism. Great principles were struck out, but not calmly and systematically developed. Old institutions were rudely torn down, and any thing which the turbulence of the moment permitted was provisionally reared in their place. The various Parliaments assembled during the Commonwealth, were but a bitter and bloody mockery of a representation. The present revolution has begun, and we trust will proceed calmly, and for that reason systematically and far. It will be likely to go further than the Commonwealth, because it will proceed on rational grounds, reforming not subverting; and building anew wherever it is necessary to take down the unsafe and antiquated structures of ancient days. There will be no Straffords impeached, nor Lauds accused of treason, but we should not be surprised should the Commons again vote ‘the Lords to be useless and dangerous, and therefore to be abolished.’

This is rendered as certain as any thing of the kind can be, by what is now going on in France. It is now proposed by the ministry of France, under the auspices of the King, to abolish the *hereditary* house of peers. It is possible, that the influence of this example may be impaired by the disorders, which perhaps await France. But if any thing like a happy issue is in reserve to reward the dangers and sacrifices of the patriots in France, then it will be just as impossible to retain an hereditary peerage in England, after it has been abolished in France, as to keep the tide at one level at Dover, and another at Calais. In both countries, the natural course of things will lead to an imitation of our senatorial bodies. Practice has seemed thus far, to establish the beneficial operation of two chambers of legislation, to an extent not promised by the theory. It is true, that the Senate of the United States was not organized merely for the sake of having a second chamber of legislation; but as the basis of a compromise be-

tween the Federal and the State principles, which, when the Constitution was formed, were supposed to be in collision. But the uniform experience of our twenty-four State Governments has been thought to establish the necessity of two houses of legislation. Of that necessity, in a simple Commonwealth, we entertain some doubts. We are not sure, that the plan of two chambers, as it was historically suggested by the division of Parliament into Lords and Commons, is not without any real ground of expediency or convenience.

It is not probable, however, that England will take the risk of a single assembly. It is far more likely, that the kingdom will be divided into senatorial districts, electing perhaps a hundred senators for a period somewhat longer than that of the House of Commons, and like our Senate invested with a portion of the executive functions of the Government.

Thirdly. We cannot draw any line between the House of Lords and the crown, in reference to most of the foregoing arguments. It appears to us, on the contrary, that though an hereditary monarchy is by no means the part of the system, where it infringes most directly on the new principle of the Government, it is that part, where the inconsistency of the old and new principles is most apparent to the observer. When the delicacy of the discussion is once overcome, it will perhaps appear, that the original and traditionary foundation of the crown has more effectually disappeared in the lapse of ages, than even that of the peerage. It never was pretended, we believe, that the peers sat in the House of Lords *Dei gratia*. It was thought that this formed the king's right to his throne. Is there a man now living in England, who entertains that opinion of the royal office? There cannot be one. But it is the ancient constitution of the realm, that there should be a king. It would be more proper, perhaps, to say, that it is the ancient constitution of the realm, that there should be a chief executive officer, clothed with such powers as Parliament may from time to time, by law, ordain, and acceding to the throne, under such modifications of the rule of hereditary succession, as the Parliament may establish. Except the name, there is very little in common between Elizabeth or Henry VIII. and William IV. The kingly office, as administered by the Tudors, is about as different from what it now is, as it is now from the office of President of the United States. The right given by act of Parliament (28 Henry VIII. c. 7) to Henry VIII. in

defect of children, to appoint his successor by testament, a right exercised by other sovereigns, differs almost as much from the present tenure, by which the crown is held,—an hereditary Protestant succession, limited by act of Parliament,—as this last does from popular choice. Now suppose it to be the sense of the people of England, (whether it be so or not we are really ignorant,) that an hereditary succession to the chief magistracy is an institution in arrears of the present state of civilization. Suppose the republicans in theory should think it time that what they consider an absurd mode of constituting the executive were reformed. Suppose economical men should think so expensive an establishment, as the crown and its incidents and appendages, ought to be retrenched. Suppose the men of sense of all parties should say, that the question, how the chief executive office should be constituted, is one on which it is as important to ascertain the sense of the people, as the proposed change in the mode of choosing the House of Commons. Suppose a House of Commons under these views, and reflecting that the subject never was fairly and without prejudice put to the people, were to raise and discuss the question, and finally either decide it themselves in favor of an elective chief magistrate, or pass an act providing for the meeting of a convention, deputed by the people to consider and settle this question; could any consistent and satisfactory objection be made to such a course, by the patrons and supporters of the present bill?

We repeat, that we do not assume to know, what would be the decision of such a convention. Captain Hall tells us, that the people of England have a warm loyal feeling, in addition to their respect for the official character of the king; that they love monarchy. It is perhaps so; and this may be in England a feeling of a generous and amiable character. But it seems to us a feeling belonging to an earlier day, and a lower stage of civilization. We should rather think, that when Lord Brougham and Vaux, ‘together with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Deputy Lord Great Chamberlain, the Lord High Constable, and the Earl Marshal, preceded by Garter,’ was employed in going round to the four sides of Westminster Abbey, and making the recognition, four times, at the late coronation, he must have been divided between an inclination to smile and to sigh; and have perhaps put the question to himself, ‘What the school-master would say of this pageantry?’

The opinion of the school-boy would be a matter of less doubt. We should think, that whoever in England should amuse a leisure hour, in reading Sir William Blackstone's chapter on the royal prerogative, would come to the conclusion, that it was nearly time that the sense of the people was taken on the whole subject. It is of the king's prerogative, in reference to foreign powers, to send and to receive ambassadors ; to make treaties, leagues, and alliances ; to make peace and war. At home, the king is a branch of the Legislature, and has a negative on the acts of its other branches ; he is generalissimo of the army and navy ; he is the fountain of justice and of honor ; the arbiter of commerce, and the supreme governor of the Church. Such, according to Sir William, are the heads of the prerogative of the crown. Should his present majesty die to-morrow, this crown, with all these prerogatives, would descend to a female child eleven years old. We should think, when the people come to put that and that together, it would be their decided sense that, if these vast prerogatives ought to vest even nominally in a girl of eleven years of age, Old Sarum and Gatton might as well be let alone. Sir William speaks of 'those branches of the royal prerogative, which invest our sovereign lord, thus all perfect and immortal in his kingly capacity, with a number of authorities and powers, in the exertion whereof consists the executive part of the Government. This is wisely placed in a single hand by the British Constitution, for the sake of unanimity, strength, and despatch.' If Sir William has rightly stated the points, in which the wisdom of this arrangement consists, it would seem a departure from that wisdom, to place

'upon a baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty.'

Among the consequences which will flow from adopting 'the sense of the people' as the new principle of the British Government, we reckon, *in the fourth place*, the entire abrogation of the present national Church establishment. This, in fact, would seem to us more likely to happen at an early day, than the suppression of the peerage or the crown. The case of the established Church, we believe to be somewhat as follows. The Church of England is established by law in England and Ireland, with certain great exclusive privileges ; and about one half of the English population are attached to that Church. In

Scotland, the Presbyterian Church is the Church established by law, and a small minority of the people belongs to the Episcopal or English Church. In Ireland, five sixths, some authorities say four fifths, of the people are of the Catholic Church.

Now, in the House of Peers, (we believe) thirty bishops and archbishops of the Church of England sit, as spiritual lords, possessing the same privileges, as members of that House, with the other peers. No Catholic bishop or priest is permitted a seat in the House of Lords, although by the late act of emancipation, the lay Catholic nobility are restored to their seats. No dignitary nor teacher of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland is allowed to sit in the House of Lords, although that Church is by law the established Church of that part of the British empire. No dissenting teacher of any rank is allowed a seat in the House of Peers, although the dissenters are one half of the population of England. Will it be in conformity with the sense of the people of Great Britain, that thirty of the dignitaries of the minority Church should possess this great privilege? Is it right, that they should? If the cause of religion require, that certain of its functionaries should hold seats in one of the Houses of Parliament, can any reason be given, why these seats should be monopolized by one communion, and that the minority?

Here even the great argument of antiquity fails; the Catholic Church is entitled to the advantage of that argument on this point. The Church of England, as such, dates, at the earliest, from 1532.

Then, too, the property of the Church. Considerable endowments were made in ancient times, and in the days of the Catholic Church, for the support of religion. A part of these were confiscated by Henry VIII., and by him bestowed on his lay favorites; a part are still applied to the service of religion, and are appropriated by the State exclusively to the established Church. Is it right, that these endowments of the ancient Catholic land-owner should be monopolized by one communion of Protestants, and that the minority? A considerable addition has, we believe, been made to these endowments since the Reformation, by reserving the tithes or a commutation of them, on the enclosure of common lands. These funds, like the more ancient ones, are also appropriated exclusively to the support of the minority Church.

The universities may be considered as a part of this Church. A liberal share of the ecclesiastical endowments is in the disposal of these noble establishments. All the dignities, offices, and emoluments of these institutions are monopolized by the minority Church; and what is harder, their advantages, as places of education, are monopolized in the same way. If we are not misinformed, a subscription to the articles of the Church of England is required at one of the universities on admission, at the other on graduation. So that a young man, who is a conscientious member of the Church established by law in Scotland, cannot be graduated at an English university; nor the son of the Earl Marshal of England, the heir of all the blood of all the Howards, receive his education at the college which, perhaps, one of his ancestors endowed.

Such a state of things cannot stand under a representative system. The universities, as a matter of course, will at least be thrown open to all comers. Equally, as a matter of course, we apprehend, will the ecclesiastical funds be applied to the support of religious teachers, on some principle of equal distribution. We go thus far, on the assumption, that these funds will continue to be raised to the extent to which they are now levied. But whether it will be thought just, by the reformed Parliament, giving effect to the popular sense, to assess on the owner of the land the whole cost of supporting the teachers of religion,—which is the effect of the present system,—we do not pretend to say.

That something will be done, and that speedily, with the Church, seems to be understood. It appears to be admitted, even on the present system, that its revenues require a new apportionment between the dignitaries and the laboring clergy. A commencement has already been made with the Irish Church. On the 6th of last September, Mr. Hume made a motion in Parliament, that an address should be presented to his Majesty, ‘that he will be graciously pleased not to recommend to fill up the vacant sees of Derry and of Dublin, until the revenues of those sees are regulated in a manner consistent with the best interests of the established Church and the peace of Ireland.’ On occasion of this motion, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that in making a disposition of these sees, it was the intention of the Government to make it, not as regarded the see of Derry, but generally as regarded

all the sees. It was his opinion, that no appropriation should be made of the revenues of the established Church to any other object ; but that a different distribution of those revenues could be made with great advantage.

It is plain, that the principle here advanced applies equally to the English sees, and, probably, to some of them in an equal degree.

Did the whole population belong to the Church of England, a new distribution of the revenues of the Church, which should give a fair remuneration to the laboring clergy, would be all that justice requires in this respect. It may be, as we have said, a question of public expediency, how far it is right to raise those funds exclusively from the land. But as the present owner of the lands came into possession of them with this incumbrance, he does not appear to be wronged. That the tenant however, does not, as is alleged, suffer a proportionate share of this burden on the land, we are not prepared to admit. But this is aside from our purpose, and would plunge us into the whole metaphysics of the subject of rent.

But the Church of England being the Church of the minority, it is plain, that 'the sense of the people' will go beyond a more equal distribution among the teachers of that Church of the funds consecrated to the purpose of religion. It will require, that by some process or other, these funds should be apportioned among all the communions. Whether this shall be done, by permitting the tithe-payer to make his payment to the religious teacher of his own election, or whether the whole shall be paid into the exchequer, to be apportioned by the Government among all the Churches of all communions, will be a question for future decision. In France, in consequence of the alienation of Church property in the revolution, the entire religious establishment is supported by the Government. It ought to be borne in mind, to the honor of the French Government, that the Protestant teachers are paid their salaries from the treasury, as well as the priests of the establishment. A similar liberality is extended by the Government of Austria to the dissenting communions in that empire, not excepting the Unitarians of Transylvania.

But we cannot disguise the conviction, that the sense of the people of Great Britain, equally represented in a free Parliament, will go much farther in the matter of Church reform, than we have yet indicated. If we have not mistaken the

state of public opinion in that country, it has on this subject been ripening toward a *grand and general system of independence* and religious freedom. If ever there was a truly Anglo-Saxon idea struck out,—if ever there was a notion suggested in the full spirit of English liberty, it was that of our glorious forefathers, the Puritans or Independents. They developed it, in all its perfection, as far as it concerns the independence of each single religious society ; but even they did not carry it out to the liberty of each and every individual conscience. But the civilization of the age has pretty nearly reached the goal on this subject, and the one principle is as widely admitted as the other.

It is an essential,—the most essential,—part of religious liberty to be permitted to join those, who agree with us in opinion, in electing the religious teacher to whose instructions we choose to listen. If we voluntarily attach ourselves to a communion, whose spiritual heads are authorized to designate the subordinate teachers, there is, of course, no hardship in their designation in this way. But the State, as such, must not interfere. Whether after its interference shall be withdrawn in Great Britain, the spiritual organization of the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Catholic, and other Churches will subsist, as it does at present, will depend on themselves. There will, probably, be a great extension of the practice of a choice of the religious teacher, by the society which he is to instruct. What difficulty would there be in adopting, in the Church of England, the constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church of this country, whose clergy are as respectable as their brethren in England, and are elected by the churches to which they minister? The pecuniary interest possessed in advowsons will, of course, if any change should be made in this system, be a proper subject for equitable indemnification. But this we are bold to say, that before a Parliament representing the sense of the people, the present ecclesiastical system cannot stand a day. There is not an argument in favor of it. Dr. Paley, a high dignitary of the established Church, admits that the provision for the support of religion in some parts of America, as he understood it, was the most perfect which had been devised. The provision to which he referred was one, which obliged the citizen to contribute to the support of a religious teacher, leaving to each individual the choice of his teacher. Short of this, the progress of reform will hardly stop in England.

In the *fifth place*, a considerable modification,—perhaps the dissolution,—of the colonial system will, probably, be among the effects produced by the new principle of the Constitution. Among the incidental, perhaps we may say the unexpected operations of the bill now pending, it has not escaped observation, that by destroying the rotten and close boroughs, that virtual representation of the Colonies, which consisted in the nomination for such boroughs of members competent and disposed to take care of colonial interests, will be destroyed. The colonial interests will now have no influence in constituting the House of Commons. To remedy this evil, Mr. Hume proposed, on the 16th of August, to apportion to the Colonies nineteen out of the thirty-two seats, by which the bill reduces the present numbers of the House. He proposed to give to British India four members, to the crown Colonies, (those having no legislative assemblies of their own) eight members, to British America three, to the West India Islands four. Mr. Hume accompanied his motion with an elaborate exposition, showing plainly the reasonableness of the plan, though the crudity of some parts of it is manifest enough. Thus Malta was to send one member, and all British India only four!—Mr. Hume's motion was seconded by the Marquis of Chandos, whose own successful proposition to divide the counties seems to have caused no little discontent on the part of the friends of the bill. Mr. Hume's motion was negatived without a division; but it was not scouted. How could it be? Has England learned nothing out of the book of our Revolution? Have all its seals been opened in vain? Are the inhabitants of the Colonies free men? Are they British citizens? Do they inherit the birthright of British privileges? Have they the common pride and sensibility of men?

Mr. Labouchere, (the intelligent member of Parliament, who visited the British American Colonies and the United States a few years since, and with his companions, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Dennison, and Mr. Wortley, carried back the respect and good will of all in America, who had the good fortune to make their acquaintance,) in replying to Mr. Hume, expressed the opinion, that the colonial members would prove merely an insulated force, at the disposal of the ministers on all other points; and cited the authority of Mr. Burke in support of the proposition, that Nature herself had placed an insuperable obstacle in the way of the attendance of colonial representatives

in the British Parliament. We do not perceive why a colonial member should be deemed incapable of entering the great and general arena of British statesmanship, and acting an independent part in the House of Commons. As to the natural obstacle, we think it greatly exaggerated. Mexico was represented in the Spanish Cortes. The case of British India is the strongest. But if we suppose the members elected a year beforehand, as half the members of the American Congress are elected,—and suppose the average voyage from India to London to be one hundred and twenty days, where is the difficulty? As to all the other colonial members, the case is unattended with difficulty. Thirty days may be safely calculated upon as a passage from Quebec or Jamaica. *No other objection, that we find, was stated!*

The American Revolution is a standing demonstration, that British Colonies must be represented or become independent, whenever the popular feeling is awakened on the subject. England brings up her children to a notion of rights and liberties, which makes them awkward subjects of arbitrary power. There never was gathered together, under the name of a people, a race more kindly disposed to order and manly subordination, than the citizens of these United States, while yet Colonies of Great Britain; and yet their colonial history is one long series of murmurs, complaints, and struggles, ending in revolution and separation. Are the Englishmen in the present Colonies of baser clay? We do not believe it. Besides this, the physical difficulty being proved to be imaginary, how can the friends of reform refuse, on principle, to give a representation to the Colonies?

But here comes a great difficulty. When a Colony reaches a state in which it is fit to be represented, and in which it has a free population to represent; when it ceases to be held by military force and is capable of a Government of laws, then it is fit for independence. The colonial system, with or without representation, never was intended for free, intelligent communities, of the kindred of the mother country. It suits infant plantations, remote and conquered savage or semi-civilized tribes, and military posts like Malta and Gibraltar, which are rather garrisons than Colonies. But the moment you recognize them as an intelligent population, possessing rights which they understand and are capable of protecting, you must then incorporate them into your body politic, as integral members, or

they will set up for themselves. So that it may be taken as an axiom, that a representative Government cannot hold distant Colonies, on any great scale. Such Colonies, if admitted to be entitled to representation, will say, You think us entitled to a voice in the Parliament of the empire. But it is not a voice in *your* metropolitan councils which we need. Your interests concern not us, and in protecting our own interests, we ought to have more than a voice, we ought to have the exclusive control. We know what is good for ourselves. If you know what is good for us, you cannot, and do not profess to make it the rule of your colonial policy. That rule is the interest of the mother country, and the interest of the Colonies only as it coincides with yours. You think we understand our own interests, or you would not send for us to enlighten you upon them. But understanding these interests, we do not see why we should have to come to London to manage them. We can manage them at home.

This is a language likely to come from some at least of the Colonies; not probably from British India. Its Government is a military despotism. Mr. Hume's idea of granting it a representation, seems to us absurd. How can a military despotism, a country containing one hundred and ten millions of men, kept in awe by twenty thousand foreign, and one hundred and eighty thousand native troops, be represented? Represent whom? The native population? Why, they have no political rights to represent or protect. Represent the army which holds them in submission? The army wants pay and promotion,—*panem et circenses*,—and nothing else. If any body in India needs representation, it is the poor natives. Mr. Hume's plan would throw the election of the four members for Hindostan into the hands of the British interest. Is that interest now too weak in the House of Commons? He says, we believe, that the member from Calcutta will be sufficient for all Upper India. Does Mr. Hume know how many provinces, kingdoms, and millions of men are contained in *all Upper India*, which he thinks will be sufficiently represented by one Englishman, chosen by the British residents at Calcutta?

British America is ripe for representation; but the people who are fit for a representative Government, are, as we have said, fit for independence. Mr. Hume proposes to give all British continental America but three representatives, (because they have assemblies of their own,) while Malta is to have one,

Gibraltar one, and Newfoundland one. A strange discrimination ! Malta and Gibraltar are mere garrisons, Newfoundland a poor fishing station. The continental provinces are an empire, daily growing in numbers, wealth, and importance. Represented or not, they will soon fall away from the British Government. A liberal Parliament could not well throw obstacles in the way of this separation. If it should be the sense of that part of his majesty's people, that they are fit to govern themselves, how could their right to do so be gainsaid ? If this right be peaceably conceded, the British Colonies on the North American continent will probably establish an independent republic of their own. If a compulsory policy be pursued by the mother country, they will as probably, on the breaking out of the first war, join the United States. British India will be held, as long as the British Government will pay the troops necessary to retain it in its present condition. The state of the British West Indies is peculiar. Their question, as to political relations, is affected by the other all-absorbing question of their domestic condition. They would unquestionably be soothed by being admitted to Parliament ; but as their great question will there be decided on grounds, which one, or two, or half a dozen colonial members, however well informed, could not affect,—on abstract grounds of moral argument,—no permanent good effect on their dispositions and feelings would be produced, by allowing them to be represented in the House of Commons. The slavery question is all in all to them. If that be decided in their favor, they will care very little about representation. If decided against them,—a result which Mr. Hume's four members would be able to do nothing to avert,—they will revolt. We have before us extracts from the West India papers, which leave no doubt on this question.

There is no part of the landscape, of which we find it so difficult to get a clear view as Ireland. A fatal wall of partition is kept up between her and the English Government. If that wall should be broken down, Ireland is safe ; if not, we see not how, under a popular Parliament, it can be retained. That wall of partition is the legal establishment in Ireland of a Church hostile to the faith of the people of Ireland. Turks and Greeks do not differ more in their feelings on this subject, than the Catholics and Protestants of Ireland. Ireland is outraged by the Church establishment ; and doubly so, on the comparison of herself with Scotland, whose national faith is

established by law. This is the great cause of Irish disaffection. Redundant population and absenteeism are evils ; but it is the Church that lies at the root of the difficulty, and poisons every thing. Unless the feelings of the people are consulted on this head, they must be held in subjection by military power, or not at all. But how are you to hold a people in military subjection, who, by popular election, send one hundred members to Parliament? The thing is impossible. If that representation do not work out an entire equality of privilege for its constituents, they will swarm off. The concessions already made to the Catholics will avail nothing. Concessions to a discontented party have no effect, but to give the party new strength and confidence. There is no medium between withholding all and granting all. If the Catholic population of Ireland shall, in each and every respect, be placed on a footing with their Protestant brethren, and every point of distinction be removed, and if Ireland be admitted to a share of the representation proportioned to her numbers, it may be retained in its connexion with England. If this is not done, it can only be kept by military possession.

The *sixth* consequence of the new principle will, we think, be a great *retrenchment* of the public establishments, and of the expenditure by which they are supported. This topic would be more fruitful in comment than any we have touched. It is a subject more immediately and practically important than any other, but we have left ourselves no room to dwell on it. It will be remembered that *retrenchment* is one of the three principles, to which the present ministry pledged themselves, in coming into office.

Another of these principles was non-interference in foreign politics, and we just indicate it, (without being able to develop the idea,) as the *last* of the consequences of the adoption of the new principle, that it will be followed by a diminution of that sort of influence, which England has been used to exercise abroad. But with the decline of this foreign influence,—fruitful of strife and trouble,—her substantial strength and inward welfare will be promoted. Like the United States, she will become weak abroad and strong at home. Mighty coalitions, foreign campaigns, great naval expeditions, extravagant subsidies, and chains of colonies stretching round the globe, must be abandoned ; but with them the wars which belong to the same system will cease ; the burdens they impose will be re-

lieved ; the swarms of consuming idlers which they nourish, will be scattered or turned into industrious producers ; and the strong powers, with which they make it necessary to fortify the executive arm, will no longer be required.

In this way, the march of national improvement will be carried on. It is a process for dispensing with extra Government. As it extends itself from nation to nation, less and less will depend on the personal qualities of those who administer the Government ; and it will cease to be in the power of a few individuals to embroil Europe and America in war. The capital, the labor, and the talent, that have been employed in the work of destruction, will be directed to the work of production and preservation, and a consequent increase of human happiness will result.

This state of things tends powerfully toward a new and greatly improved condition of international politics. The ancient civilization was so feeble in its principle, that it seemed hardly to admit of an extension beyond the sphere of one great political family. A series of States in the west of Asia succeeded each other, each rising on the ruins of its predecessor ; and none of them proving the source of light to be contemporaneously enjoyed by other nations. The civilization of Europe next arose in Greece ; struggled a while with that of Persia ; was at one moment on the point of being overwhelmed ; but having escaped in that crisis, obtained a mastery under the auspices of Alexander, which has never since been permanently wrested from Europe. But it proved impossible to build up the civilization of Italy, on any other basis than the ruins of Greece.

The diffusion of Christianity was followed with a great extension of the arts congenial to a spiritual religion. In the obscurity of the dark ages, a great work of spreading improvement was carried on, to which justice is hardly done. The erection throughout Christendom of churches and religious houses, with the organization of a body of men devoted to the service of a faith built on written records, and providing a system of religious instruction, was itself an engine for diffusing intellectual improvement, beyond all which the ancient world possessed. Nor must we forget the new instruments of social intercourse and communication, the compass and the press. In a word, it was found in the formation of the modern political system, that Europe had become capable of supporting more

than one civilized nation ; that a family of States, rivalling each other in the arts of life, could subsist side by side.

But then sprang up the difficulties incident to their perpetual collisions, feuds, and wars. These nations, being all organized under forms of Governments, which threw the control of affairs into the hands of a few men, their personal passions and contested titles were a source of eternal wars. A principle of international peace became necessary. We now want to constitute our Governments so that it will be hard to go to war. We wish to put the last hand to the great improvement of modern civilization over that of the ancient world, and put an end to this cruel necessity of waging war every thirty years.

It is plain that this can only be done, by giving full development to the representative principle. This will cut off the great source of wars, the personal passions of those in power. It was the unfortunate prejudice which Mr. Canning had conceived against the United States, which eventually produced the war of 1812 ; neither Lord Castlereagh, nor the Duke of Wellington, nor Lord Grey, would, in the judgment we have formed of these ministers, have allowed the collisions between the two countries to ripen into war ; certainly a free Parliament would not have allowed it. The revolutionary war of 1775, was against the sense of the people of England. It has ever appeared to us, that the unnecessary interference of Mr. Pitt in French politics brought on the wars of the French Revolution, with all their consequences.

Our whole simple philosophy on this subject is contained in the words of Cowper ;

‘ War is a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at.’

By kings, we mean, of course, kings and ministers. It is itself a great triumph of modern improvement, that so much less depends on the personal character of the prince in many States of Europe, than formerly. Still, however, his personal character greatly influences the selection of ministers ; and the ministry do but substitute their own personality for that of the king. For personal reasons, from personal views, opinions, passions, they play this dreadful game of war. The sense of the people,—the calm, deliberate sense of the people,—is against it. Two enlightened countries, freely represented, could scarcely be wrought up to the point of carrying a declara-

tion of war against each other, through all the stages of a legislative enactment. If a thorough reform of the British Government shall bring the collective sense of the people of England into the councils of that country, and a like happy issue crown the movement in France; we should not despair of finding the influence of these two countries, in connexion with that of the United States, prove sufficient to put an end to war among civilized nations, and leave it to barbarous and despotic nations and Governments,—a fit engine to be employed by them for mutual havoc.

How long will it be before such a consummation will be brought about? Let no man, who loves his race and augurs favorably of its destinies, be put out of countenance by this question. How long is it since all Western Europe, now the seat of Christianity and of letters, and the abode of an intelligent population, was covered with tribes of painted savages? Less than eighteen hundred years. Compare the condition of Great Britain, and the entire North of Europe now, with what it was eight or nine centuries ago. The mechanical and industrious arts have added incalculably to the power of social and improving influences in modern times. There is no extravagance in predicting a vastly accelerated progress of civilization. But should it be slower than we wish or hope, it is not the less sure; and the object is one worthy to be obtained by generations and centuries of effort. No sacrifice is costly; no time is long. A thousand years are as one day. It is not we who are doing the work; it is the long line of generations, of which we are but a little part, and which, from the first blow that was struck for liberty in modern Europe, has been struggling toward the same end.

We have intimated our opinions as to measures, some of which we think are likely to follow the recognition of the sense of the people, as the rule of the Government and the principle of the constitution of England. These farther reforms, as far as they depend on the will of the people of England, may be brought about by parliamentary enactment, or by a still *more authentic* mode of ascertaining the sense of the people; we mean the adoption, by the people themselves, of a new *Magna Charta*, a reformed written constitution. Should the friends of reform in England be disposed to pursue this course, we beg leave to suggest the method of procedure usually adopted in this country, as simple, convenient, and safe.

Several of the States of this Union, and among them the largest and most powerful, have found occasion to revise their constitutions. This was last done in Virginia, two years ago. For this purpose, an act is passed by the State Legislature, authorizing the assembling of a convention, and prescribing the qualifications of its members, and their mode of election, which are usually those of the most popular branch of the State Legislature. The convention meets, revises the constitution, and prepares its report. This is submitted to the people, who accept or reject it, and this ends the matter. This has been done over and over again in the United States, and always without embarrassment, difficulty, or commotion. An analogous course in England would be, to provide by act of Parliament for the election of members of a convention, in proportion to the population, (including or excluding the Colonies, according as it might be intended to incorporate them or not into the State,) to be chosen in convenient geographical districts, and on some popular principle of suffrage. Let this convention meet, not like the barons at Runnymede, to extort a charter of liberties from a tyrant, but to devise a liberal constitution of Government for the people; to be accepted or rejected by them; and containing in itself proper conservative principles, like those embodied in the constitution of the United States. It has been with no small satisfaction, that, after listening so long to the denunciation of republics in general, and the Government of the United States in particular, on the score of fluctuation and instability,—after hearing our constitution reproached on this ground in the present debate, by one of the most respectable members of Parliament, we find our learned colleague of the *British Quarterly Review* asking of the friends of the Reform Bill, if they ‘are aware of the existence of that *powerful conservative principle*, so wisely embodied in the original frame of the American constitution,’ and contrasted, by the same writer, with the exposure of the British constitution ‘to the mercy of an omnipotent Legislature.’ We had ourselves drawn this contrast, in our remarks of last July; but we did not flatter ourselves that we should so soon see it recognized in such a quarter.

If a new constitution should be drawn up for England, by such a convention as we have described, conforming to the ascertained sense of the people, and containing a provision that no change shall be made in it, but on a vote of two thirds of

Parliament, ratified by two thirds of the people, the liberties of England, in our humble judgment, will be put upon a basis of security, beyond the reach of all the ordinary causes of political decline. A vast reduction of expenditure would be the consequence of the simplification of the Government, and the change in its foreign policy. This would lead to a proportionate diminution of the burden of taxation, and to an effectual attack on the mountain mass of the public debt. Look at the United States. Behold what these free institutions have done for us! In fifty-seven years, we have passed through two wars, and great vicissitudes of domestic politics, and have, nevertheless, paid off a public debt of nearly two hundred millions of dollars,—grown up from three millions of inhabitants to thirteen,—and settled the continent for a thousand miles into the interior. Forty millions of pounds sterling of public debt paid off!—Should we be extravagant, if we said, that, compared to our population and wealth, this debt is as great for us, as the British debt for Great Britain? Yet this has our tumultuous democracy achieved. What has the stable monarchy of Great Britain done in the meantime? Quadrupled her debt. And for what purpose? To put down the French revolution. Is it down? Look at its *denouement* in July, 1830. To put down the French revolution? Every dollar spent by Great Britain in that cause tended to assure its success. No, this mighty burden was laid on England, in support of a system of politics, conceived by a great man, but, even on English principles, of doubtful soundness, and so regarded by other English statesmen as great as he. Such a policy, under a free representation of the deliberate and intelligent sense of the people, could not have been persevered in. It has entailed on England her present heritage of embarrassment. It is the load of taxation,—the intolerable weight of each man's share of that load,—which now gives all its force to this clamor for reform. The British statesman, who thinks to give quiet to the country,—lasting quiet,—by any thing short of a great diminution of taxation, deceives himself. The topic of agitation may vary, but the discontent will continue. They may change the place, but they will keep the pain. Catholic disabilities may be removed, test and corporation acts repealed, parliamentary reform be granted. It is only filing away successively another piece of parchment in the archives of State. And unless the

reform of Parliament is followed by radical changes in the system of Government, in virtue of which it can be administered at half its present expense, nothing will have been gained toward satisfying the public mind. There the great load of taxation remains; the mighty weight, which runs down, and runs down, and never finds a bottom, but is giving a constantly accelerated motion to the whole madding machinery of opposition, agitation, disaffection, and revolt. But it is probable that the reformed Parliament, containing, as it will, a greatly increased representation of the public voice, will lead to other reforms, productive of diminished expenditure and reduced taxation, and in this probability rests the hope, that it will prove a measure of health and preservation to the State.

ART. III.—*Defence of Poetry.*

The Defence of Poesy. By SIR PHILIP SIDNEY. *Re-published in the Library of the Old English Prose Writers. Vol. II.* Cambridge. Hilliard & Brown. 1831.

‘Gentle Sir Philip Sidney, thou knewest what belonged to a scholar; thou knewest what pains, what toil, what travel, conduct to perfection; well couldest thou give every virtue his encouragement, every art his due, every writer his desert, ’cause none more virtuous, witty or learned than thyself.’* This eulogium was bestowed upon one of the most learned and illustrious men, that adorned the last half of the sixteenth century. Literary history is full of his praises. He is spoken of as the ripe scholar, the able statesman,—‘the soldier’s, scholar’s, courtier’s eye, tongue, sword,’—the man ‘whose whole life was poetry put into action.’ He and the Chevalier Bayard were the connecting links between the ages of chivalry and our own.

Sir Philip Sidney was born at Penshurst in West Kent, on the 29th of November, 1554, and died on the 16th day of October, 1586, from the wound of a musket-shot, received under the walls of Zutphen, a town in Guelderland, on the banks of the Issel. When he was retiring from the field of battle, an incident occurred, which well illustrates his chival-

* Nash’s *Pierce Penniless*.